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General Assembly

Seventy-second session

Official Records

29th plenary meeting
Monday, 9 October 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lajčák ..... (Slovakia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 140 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/72/519)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The positions of delegations regarding the recommendation of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. Therefore, if there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, may I take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee that is before the Assembly today?

It was so decided.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before we begin to take action on the recommendation contained in the report of the Fifth Committee (A/72/519), I would like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report. The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution, entitled "Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations", without a vote. May I take it that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 72/2).

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 140.

Agenda items 9 and 14

Report of the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Economic and Social Council (A/72/3)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/72/255)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): In connection with agenda item 9, I would like to recall that, pursuant to resolution 58/316, of 1 July 2004, the Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided, at its 2nd plenary meeting, held on 15 September, to consider agenda item 9 in its entirety in plenary meeting, on the understanding that the administrative programme and budgetary aspects should be dealt with by the Fifth Committee.

At the same meeting, the Assembly took note of the clarification that, in implementing resolution 58/316 to consider item 9 in its entirety in plenary meeting, the

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relevant parts of chapter I of the report (A/72/3) that are under agenda items already allocated to the Main Committees would be considered by the Committee concerned for final action by the General Assembly.

In connection with agenda item 14, members will recall that, pursuant to resolution 57/270 B, of 23 June 2003, the Assembly decided to consider under the item the chapters of the annual report of the Economic and Social Council relevant to the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including through the participation of the President of the Council in its discussions.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Cristián Barros Melet, Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, to introduce the report of the Council.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce to the General Assembly the 2017 report (A/72/3) of the Economic and Social Council.

In 2017, the Economic and Social Council built on the initial phase of implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related commitments and integrated lessons learned from years 1 and 2.

We have made a good start, but further work, coordination and innovation are needed. We must ensure that the impact of the Economic and Social Council system as a whole is greater than the sum of its parts. That includes the work of its segments and forums, functional and regional commissions and expert bodies. As a Bureau member during the 2017 session, I can attest to the Economic and Social Council's commitment to strengthening its support to Member States and development partners. Let me briefly outline some of the highlights of our work from the past year.

First, the Economic and Social Council built on its successes in the follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development was held under the theme "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world" and reviewed a subset of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in depth. During the three-day ministerial segment, 43 countries presented their voluntary national reviews. Common themes in those reviews included the importance of bringing all the parties together in a multi-stakeholder approach to implementation, as well as the critical importance of involvement at the highest levels of Government. In addition, the Forum was enriched by 147 side events, nine learning courses, several special activities, an SDG business forum and a partnership exchange.

The second Economic and Social Council Forum on Financing for Development follow-up demonstrated its importance as an inclusive platform for discussion of a range of key issues. The outcome document (E/FFDF/2017/3) reaffirmed the key elements of the Addis Ababa Agenda and included new commitments on policies and actions, such as the acceleration of national and international efforts, sending a strong signal of our commitment to multilateralism and the global partnership for sustainable development.

Secondly, the Economic and Social Council's 2017 session established a shared understanding of the adjustments needed to enable the United Nations development system to get better results in a changing development landscape. The Economic and Social Council's two-year dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system laid the foundations for a landmark resolution (71/243) on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of the United Nations system, adopted by the General Assembly in December 2016. The resolution requested that the Secretary-General lead a process of change by presenting proposals and rallying the development system around those proposals.

In July, the Secretary-General presented the Economic and Social Council with an outline of his reform proposals, seeking the views of Member States in order to develop the proposals in detail this autumn. The proposals include the two remaining mandates — the system-wide strategic planning document and the proposal on the resident coordinator system. The Economic and Social Council continues to be the main forum for ongoing consultations on the repositioning exercise and the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. Member States used the Economic and Social Council's 2017 segment on operational activities for development to address implementation of the resolution in detail.

Thirdly, the engagement of stakeholders in the work of the Economic and Social Council and the United Nations development system continued to intensify. The

role of the Economic and Social Council as a platform for multi-stakeholder participation is unrivalled. Last year, 460 non-governmental organizations obtained consultative status with the Council, a new record, and the meetings of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations were webcast, thereby helping to improve communications and transparency.

The Economic and Social Council's Youth Forum continues to grow in terms of participation and impact and underlines the potential of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for promoting solidarity and action among young people in all countries. Young people are eager to be involved in implementing the SDGs in concrete ways, including through youth advisory councils, grass-roots-driven solutions and participation by youth representatives in Member States' delegations to the High-level Political Forum. The Economic and Social Council also continued to collaborate with key partners through its Partnership Forum and Multi-stakeholder Forum for Science, Technology and Innovation. The participants in the Partnership Forum emphasized the importance of developing a common set of core guidelines and principles on partnerships for the entire United Nations system.

Fourthly, the Economic and Social Council continued to strengthen its leadership role in identifying new issues and promoting reflection, debate and innovative and comprehensive thinking. In 2017, the Council devoted time to the issue of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 9 by organizing a special meeting and two preparatory events in Africa. That has resulted in the expansion of two concrete initiatives of the United Nations system for supporting infrastructure, industrialization and innovation — the Country Partnership Programme of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Accelerated Agriculture and Agro-industry Development Initiative, led by UNIDO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

The President took the Chair.

The Economic and Social Council also worked to deepen our understanding of the nexus between peace and sustainable development, building on last year's joint meeting with the Peacebuilding Commission. The joint meeting on the situation in the Sahel underlined the importance of addressing the root causes of poverty while avoiding a disproportionate emphasis on security.

The comprehensive report discusses all of this in greater detail. On behalf of the 2017 Economic and Social Council Bureau, we would like to thank Member States and our partners in the United Nations development system for their continued strong collaboration and support. Under the guidance of its new President, Mrs. Marie Chatardová, I am sure that in 2018 the Economic and Social Council will build on the achievements of this session. We look forward to continuing its close working relationship with the General Assembly in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mr. Sinha (India): We would like to congratulate the Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic on her assumption of the presidency of the Economic and Social Council and to assure her and the new Bureau of our steadfast support for their work. We would also like to take this opportunity to commend the outgoing President, the Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe, and his Bureau for their stewardship of the Council's activities in the previous session. We thank the delegation of Chile for presenting the report of the Council (A/72/3) today.

India attaches great importance to the work of the Economic and Social Council and welcomes its 2017 report, which gives helpful details of its activities. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Economic and Social Council, with its well-planned working methods, has been able to give special attention to implementing and following up on the outcomes of all major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social, environmental and other related fields contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We note with appreciation its enhanced activities related to the 2030 Agenda, including organizing the Forum on Financing for Development follow-up, the segment on operational activities for development, the Partnership Forum, the integration segment and the Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation, as well as the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the special meeting of the Council on international cooperation in tax matters, the Youth Forum in New York, and the humanitarian affairs segment in Geneva, among others.

We would like to commend the Economic and Social Council for convening the High-level Political Forum, the second of its kind since the adoption of the 2030

Agenda. The Forum offered a place for policymakers from around the world to exchange ideas on how to accelerate the implementation of the far-reaching 2030 Agenda consistently and effectively. It included well-organized presentations of voluntary national reviews by 43 countries, including my own, as well as in-depth reviews of the progress that has been made on seven specific Sustainable Development Goals, and the adoption of a ministerial declaration on the theme "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world".

India presented its voluntary national review in the spirit of sharing experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. We have integrated the SDG framework into our national development strategies. India's success in sustaining robust economic growth aimed at eradicating poverty should make a major contribution to the global achievement of the SDGs. As it does, it will bring forth technologies and pathways for progress that can be shared with other developing countries in order to enable them to achieve sustainable development as well.

In a spirit of South-South solidarity, India continues to expand its development partnerships over a wide range of capacity-building sectors with fellow developing countries in various continents, especially those in more vulnerable situations. In June of this year we established the India-United Nations Development Partnership Fund, with the aim of enhancing our contribution to South-South cooperation as a means to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We are happy to note that the theme for the next High-level Political Forum will be "From global to local: supporting sustainable and resilient societies in urban and rural communities". It is our expectation that the Economic and Social Council will address sustainable development challenges through the prism of poverty eradication as its central and overarching objective. We also commend its effort in organizing the second Forum on Financing for Development follow-up, which provided a useful platform for substantive deliberations with representatives of intergovernmental bodies and the senior management of the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and which acknowledged the necessity for a wider and global framework for financing for development in the spirit of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

India has a historic association with the Economic and Social Council, whose first President was Sir Ramaswamy Mudaliar, who played an important role in formulating the sections on it in the Charter of the United Nations. In line with its role as a large developing country, India has played an active role in the Council's deliberations and activities.

The architect of the Economic and Social Council Chamber at United Nations Headquarters famously left it's ceiling unfinished, signifying that the work of development is never finished. While the United Nations development system entities are individually taking important steps to mainstream the 2030 Agenda into their work and programmatic instruments, a system-wide approach should be strengthened. We would like the Council to be more purposeful, action-oriented and policy-relevant. It should keep the interests of developing countries at the centre of its work, and its policy recommendations should lead to positive change on the ground and in the lives of ordinary people around the world.

Last but not least, as we plan various forums in this session, we would like to have a balance between the time allocated for panel discussions and that available for deliberations among Member States, or we will run the risk of making our processes academic, at the expense of the Council's ownership by Member States.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate India's commitment to the work and activities of the Economic and Social Council and to constructive engagement in its work in the coming months.

Mr. Alsharrah (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to take note of the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/72/3). The various reports we have been presented with will help us to achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, at every level.

Along with our various development partners, we had already made considerable progress on the Millennium Development Goals, enabling us to achieve sustainable development and economic growth. Tremendous efforts were made to achieve a successful outcome for the July 2015 third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa and to take into account the various changes our development plans have undergone, enabling us to move forward after September 2015 while taking into

consideration the national particularities and varying development levels of developing countries in the framework of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. We also saw the holding of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, at which the Paris Agreement on Climate Change was adopted. There we worked to establish concrete measures to combat climate change based on the principle of collective responsibility and expressed our desire to work alongside other States to fulfil our obligations and ensure that no one is left behind.

This has been part of a process of consultation with all stakeholders with the aim of eradicating poverty in all its forms and aspects and to tackle that challenge, which is the most important one we face at the global level as we work to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. We are grateful to a number of Member States as well as to the entities and agencies of the United Nations, particularly the Economic and Social Council, of which we were a member from 2013 to 2015. We have seen various reforms in the Economic and Social Council that have made it possible for it to become a truly effective and equitable platform for Member States and for our efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, with significant effects for the results achieved. We hope that the Council will continue to make progress in that regard in the years to come, particularly through its High-level Political Forums, as well as in the context of the Forum on Financing for Development follow-up.

I would also like to emphasize the importance of continued cooperation for tackling the major challenges that prevent developing countries from assisting those in highly fragile social categories, especially States dealing with extremely difficult circumstances. It is essential to ensure that they too are given the opportunity to achieve prosperity. In that regard, all countries should share this responsibility in tackling these difficulties together. We must work together for sustainable development and ensure that developing countries have access to the sustainable and predictable financing that they need in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. They need conducive conditions and new and innovative financing options to do so. Since the developed donor States have committed to providing such support and assistance to developing countries, we urge that they fulfil their commitment to allocating 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product to official development aid.

The State of Kuwait has made great efforts, especially under the leadership of Sheikh Sabah Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals so that people all over the world can benefit from mechanisms and initiatives to eradicate poverty, reduce their debt — especially foreign debt — and combat the effects of climate change. It is essential that we continue to move forward on this path under the auspices of the United Nations. In that regard, we have a created the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, a groundbreaking step that has enabled us to help neighbouring States to achieve development and see genuine changes on the ground. We have also contributed to many international partnerships, a tradition for Kuwait, which has been at the forefront of joint development and humanitarian aid efforts for a long time.

We have therefore been advancing our efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 by establishing a number of policies and measures aimed at fulfilling the Goals at the national level, based on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We have also integrated that effort into our various national strategies, including our new vision for "Kuwait 2035", a strategy designed to position Kuwait as a leading State on the cultural, social and economic fronts in our region by 2035. In that regard, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the vision he has outlined for reforming and revitalizing the work of the United Nations in order to enable it to help States around the world achieve stability and development. We firmly believe in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It can be achieved if we States show the necessary political will, work together and abide by our various commitments.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): The major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and environmental fields have resulted in ambitious and transformative global development frameworks. My delegation sees their overarching objective as eradicating poverty and achieving inclusive and sustainable development growth while leaving no one behind. In that regard, they complement and reinforce one another in ensuring a prosperous and decent standard of living for all, while respecting development's three dimensions, economic, social and environmental.

Despite the uneven and mixed progress that has been made in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we know that if we cannot overcome our current complex and interconnected challenges, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will not be met by 2030, particularly in the least developed countries. While we all agree, therefore, that adopting ambitious and universal master plans is the right way to go — and one that we still consider an achievement of multilateralism — if the international community cannot translate them into concrete actions, a major opportunity will be missed, with serious consequences for millions of people around the world, whose faith in the United Nations and in its States Members' capacity and willingness to deliver on collective promises would be undermined.

Without in any way underestimating the current problems we face, if the world recommits with the same optimism and political determination that it has demonstrated in endorsing the intergovernmentally agreed-on frameworks, it will indeed be possible to end poverty, combat climate change and mobilize sufficient resources. Moreover, what we achieved through the Millennium Development Goals can serve as lessons and inspiration for finishing our unfinished business. My delegation would therefore like to underscore that what we require is a genuine and revitalized global partnership and multi-stakeholder collaboration for the full and timely implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework, the Paris Climate Change Agreement and the New Urban Agenda.

It will also be imperative to strengthen coordination and coherence in the follow-up to decisions taken by United Nations conferences and forums. In that regard, the ministerial declarations of the Second Forum on Financing for Development and the 2017 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development should be implemented to address the many gaps that remain in fulfilling the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, thereby creating an international environment more conducive to the realization of the 2030 Agenda.

Developed countries should honour their commitments to providing sufficient financial assistance and transferring appropriate technologies for developing countries, particularly least developed countries, in order to complement national efforts. In addition, as a universal body, the United Nations has an important role to play in the full and timely implementation of our global development frameworks. My delegation would like to stress the importance of further enhancing synergy among United Nations entities and other global bodies, with the objective of supporting Member States in their efforts to implement the SDGs. In that regard, my delegation supports the Secretary-General's reform agenda, which we hope will further strengthen the development effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations system, anchored in national ownership and leadership.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these items.

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Economic and Social Council, contained in document A/72/3?

It was so decided.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 9 and 14.

Agenda item 117

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Specific meeting focused on development

The President: In accordance with resolution 60/265, dated 30 June 2006, on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit, a specific meeting focused on development should be held. I have been informed that no Member State has requested to take the floor under this item.

The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 117.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.